



Volume 1, Issue 05

Ouranophantor

May 2018

A Newsletter of St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church



St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church

733 S. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60607

www.stbasilchicago.org



Church Office:

Rev. Fr. Dimitri Tobias, *Proistamenos*

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Parish Council President:

Jayme Schenk

Worship Hours

Sundays: Orthros 8:15 a.m. followed by Divine Liturgy

Weekdays: Divine Liturgy 8:30 a.m.

Esperinos: For Major Feasts 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday: Paraklesis Service 6:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events

- **Sunday, May 6 -**
 - St. Basil Quarterly Potluck - Please join us following Divine Liturgy
 - Sunday School Retreat "Church of the Five Senses" following Divine Liturgy
 - Prison Ministry—Mother's Day cards following Divine Liturgy
- **Sunday, May 20**
 - Spring General Assembly - following Divine Liturgy
- **Thursday, May 31 -**
 - Trivia Night at Billy Goat Inn (1535 W. Madison St.) at 6:30 pm
- **Wednesday, July 11—**
 - St. Basil Golf Outing at Odyssey Country Club (19110 S. Ridgeland Ave, Tinley Park IL)

For more information:

www.stbasilchicago.org or contact church office at 312-243-3738.

We welcome new families to our parish!

Now is the time to reach out to your loved ones who have fallen away for whatever reason and bring them back to church. Now is the time to share your faith with others. Together we must grow. Together we must build the Body of Christ. Invite someone to a service or to a church event. We have one of the friendliest communities in the Archdiocese. Let us go out so that they will know we are Christians by our love.

Follow on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Basil-Greek-Orthodox-Church-476775679041438/>

Sacraments and Blessings

Baptisms:



Chrismations:



Weddings:



Funerals:



40-Day Blessings:



Father Dimitri's Message



My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is risen!

As we contemplate the victory of the Resurrection, let us look to its ramifications to us. Too often we try to relegate our Savior to a simple mathematical equation. God is love and God loves me; ergo I cannot do anything that would cause God to not love me. By this same line of thinking, God made me this way so clearly He wants me to behave this way. God gave me these desires. This sort of justification can be used for any number of sinful behaviors.

The alternative that I hear just as often is the expression, “Well, I am only human,” which implies that because Jesus is God He cannot expect me to live up to His level of holiness. WRONG!

That line of thinking could not be further from the truth on either end. First and foremost, the term “Son of God” is only found 35 times in the Bible. Compare that to the 173 times “Son of man” is uttered and you begin to see the more important of those epithets. Jesus Christ more often than any other title refers to Himself as the Son of man. This is because He desires to show kinship with us. He was 100 percent Man, with 100 percent human will and 100 percent human energies. That does not change the fact that He is also 100 percent God with 100 percent divine will and 100% divine energies. This paradoxical yet perfect union is one of the primary subjects of the Seven Ecumenical Councils in seeking to answer the question of who and what is Jesus Christ.

Let us not forget our Lord's humanity. He wept, He slept, He ate, He was tempted. He experienced every aspect of our humanity. As St. Gregory the Theologian states, “That which is not assumed, is not saved.” If Jesus Christ was not a perfect and complete human being, none of us could be saved. Jesus would have been a pretender, a fraud, a hoax, a supernatural being parading in a human suit. Because He suffered and died for us as a perfect human being, He became the new Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45–49) אָדָם *hebrew*) Humanity, ἄνθρωπος *Anthropos*).

And let us be clear. He is the only true and real human being. He is the only human with true free will. Those who have become like Him have become real humans, the saints. As St. Athanasios writes, “God became man so that man could become like God.”



After all, is it real free will if you can only choose between A or B? Without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). We can only choose between following our passions, which are orchestrated for our downfall by the enemy, or becoming voluntary slaves of God (Δούλοι του Θεού). “A servant cannot serve two masters” (Luke 16:13 and Matthew 6:24), gives clear recognition that we are slaves, one way or another. That is not freedom. Our only freedom is choosing which master to follow.

And yet, we were made with free will, the highest of gifts. The reality is that by becoming voluntary slaves of God and emptying ourselves, we acquire the Holy Spirit and we open the eyes of our heart/soul (our Nous Νοῦς) to see the mystical reality of the world. Real free will entails being able to choose to do good without the influence of God. Only the saints who have achieved deification θεώσις (theosis) can truly claim to be human.

To say, “I am only human” as a sign of weakness denigrates the word. We are the height of creation. Human weakness is better expressed as the personal failings of our passions that are a result of the fall of mankind. Our weaknesses and sinful desires do not come from God the Creator but from him who warps that creation into a mockery of the divine; who replaces humility with arrogance, self control with gluttony, generosity with avarice, forgiveness with wrath, simplicity with vanity, diligence with sloth, and love with carnal lusts. The evil one sends all manner of thoughts our way, hoping that even one of the thousands upon thousands thrown will stick to us and cause us to think on that irrational and sinful thought more deeply. He hopes that by thinking of that thought more deeply, we will contemplate enacting it; that we will justify it in our minds; and finally do the dark thought. His victory is complete when that dark thought is repeated in action until it becomes a habit, a habit that require spiritual surgery to remove.

You see, the most evil moment of that progression is the step in which we justify our sin. We try to tell ourselves that God made us a certain way or that He would approve of our decision given the circumstances. Instead of following obediently the commandments of God, we follow our own perversions and our own made-up reality of what we think God is. This makes God an idea or a principle.

But God is not an idea or a principle. He is a person. He is a human being with a human will in addition to His divine will. This is why His death and resurrection mean so much! By dying for us He freed us from the ancient error. He ransomed Himself for our sins and became the final Blood Sacrifice. Through Him we become heirs of the Most High. We become partakers of Divinity. We can truly learn what it means to be free.

It is true that God is love and there is no sin that He won’t forgive outside of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, but that forgiveness requires repentance, requires love, requires obedience to Him. This obedience is not arduous. He helps us carry our cross. He is our true example of humanity and humility.

Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

I remain your servant in Christ,
Fr. Dimitri Tobias, *Proistamenos*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Dimitri". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

President's Letter

By Nick Georgopoulos

Dear St. Basil Parishioners,

Christ is risen! I would first like to recognize Father Dimitri and all those who contributed to the beautiful services during Holy Week. Thank you as well to the choir, altar boys, chanters, readers, and myrrh bearers for their participation. Finally, a special thanks to the congregation for truly making this a spiritual and magnificent culmination of the Lenten journey.

The Lenten journey was complemented this year with a series of lectures on each Wednesday evening following vespers. These were sponsored by the Philoptochos, Sunday School, parish council, and the Welcoming Ministry. Saint Basil is very grateful to all of the speakers for taking time to share their expertise on topics such as "Great and Holy Lent" by Father Dimitri, "Women in the Orthodox Church" shared by Christina Kidonakis, and "In the Fire," given by fellow parish council member Arthur Harris.



I would like to inform everyone about some upcoming events to support our church the next couple of months. On Thursday, May 31, Saint Basil is hosting a trivia night at the Billy Goat Inn on West Madison Street. Tell your family, friends, and coworkers to come out for what will be a great evening full of food, laughter, and an opportunity to test your knowledge on a variety of topics. We will also be hosting the annual golf outing later this summer. Please check the bulletin or speak to Vicky in the office for more information on these events.

I look forward to the cooperation of the weather as we go through spring and await the approach of summer. The St. Tryphon Garden Ministry is doing their part and has planted flowers around the church. We hope to see everyone as we approach Pentecost Sunday in May. Please continue to support our church this spring and summer by becoming a steward if you have yet to do so and participating in all of the wonderful events St. Basil's has to offer. As someone once said, "Happiness held is the seed, happiness shared is the flower."

Nick Georgopoulos, Parish Council Member

Philoptochos Update

By Vana Kikos

Christos Anesti Everyone!

Our Annual Palm Sunday Luncheon was another resounding success. Many thanks to all who helped out and for all the donations we received. Thanks also to our Nichole Kourvas for arranging the pickup and delivery of the delicious psari plaki from Boston Fish Market in Des Plaines.

Congratulations to this year's four Lamb Raffle winners:

Presbytera Maria Tobias, Melita Green, Stella Antonoglou, and Kathryn Georgiou

Please check our Facebook page for photos from our Loukoumades Sunday hosted on April 22. Delicious, and homemade, they were enjoyed by all.

The May Philoptochos meeting is Tuesday, May 15, 7 p.m. All interested women who would like to sit in or to join us, please stop by. Philoptochos members are also available to talk with after church services every Sunday at Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall.

In His Love and Service, Vana Kikos, Philoptochos President

Stewardship Update

By Tom Bezanos

Our 2018 Stewardship Goal is 200 Stewards and \$200,000.

2018 Progress-to-Date:

- ◇ Stewards 97
- ◇ Pledged \$135,250
- ◇ Collected \$61,250



HAVE YOU BECOME A STEWARD OF ST. BASIL

CHURCH?

Visit our website at www.stbasilchicago.org and click on “Our Parish” and “Stewardship” to learn more or contact church office at 312-243-3738 for additional information.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt. 6:21)

Girls Ministry

By Mary Peroulas

Christ Has Risen!

The myrrh bearing women were the only disciples with enough courage to go to Christ's tomb. They were the first ones to hear the good news of the Resurrection and they had the honor of proclaiming it to the Apostles. God chose the witness of women to spread the gospel. So began our discussion with Father Dimitri about the important role of women in the church. The topic of myrrh bearing Women was of particular significance to the girls since some had recently participated in the Holy Friday evening service as myrrh bears. Father talked about the courage and strength of women and that with determination and hard work we can meet our goals.

We also discussed our new Metropolitan Nathanael. We learned that he is a kind and humble leader. A big focus for His Eminence will be young people. We look forward to meeting him when he visits our church. Finally, we did a Q&A with Father Dimitri. We learned about his background and where he served prior to coming to our church.

We also learned that he has wanted to be a priest since he was six years old. We are blessed to have Father Dimitri as our spiritual leader at St. Basil.

Proverbs 22:6 ~ Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.



Someone You Should Know

Claudette (Melanie) Hillock

AThe idea of becoming part of St. Basil first occurred to Claudette Hillock when she was in kindergarten at McLaren Elementary School located at Ashland and Flournoy, in the shadow of the church. On the McLaren playground at recess, she spied the dome of the church and was moved by its beauty. She told her grandmother that when she grew up she would go to that church. Years later, in 2005, Claudette, who was raised Catholic, made good on her promise when she and her daughter, Paige, were chrismated into the Orthodox faith at St. Basil. At her chrismation Claudette took the name Melanie. Prior to her chrismation, she attended services here with her Cypriot husband, who was born into Orthodoxy. She has embraced the faith wholeheartedly and has a special reverence for the Theotokos.

Claudette is a native Chicagoan who grew up in the Tri-Taylor area near the parish. She graduated from Maria High School and Loyola University. She has some Greek blood on her father's side, and on her mother's side she has a mixed European heritage. Polish, Hispanic, American Indian, and French are a few of the cultural influences that make her who she is.

Claudette's defining quality is her artistic nature. Looking for a way to serve the church, she decided upon flower arranging, a skill she learned by working in her sister-in-law's flower shop in the 1990s and by helping longtime parishioner Dimitra Baziotis with Holy Week decorations. Claudette and Dimitra now take the lead in decorating the icons and the epitafio that grace St. Basil during Pascha. Claudette also sings in the choir and participates in the newly formed welcoming committee. "I wanted to be part of the welcoming committee because the parishioners here welcomed me so warmly when I joined the church," She recalls. "I want to do the same for others."

Claudette works two jobs. Her position as a financial control specialist for the greater Cook County school district draws on the analytical side of her brain. Her other position, moonlighting at Holi Cannoli, a referral-based catering service that specializes in miniature European desserts, taps into her creative nature. Despite her demanding work schedule, she finds time to participate fully in the life of the parish. In her spare time, she enjoys drawing and painting.



St. Tryphon Garden Ministry

By Marina Arvanitis

Although spring weather hasn't yet arrived in Chicago, the garden's daffodils, crocuses, and tulips are still trying to peek through. Thank you to Lambros and Mary Peroulas for all their hard work getting the garden ready for Holy Week by cleaning up the beds. Everyone who visited for the holidays surely noted the beauty of the gardens and your excellent handiwork.

Also thank you to Angie Harris for purchasing the beautiful new garden icon. It depicts Christ and the Apostles in a vine, and Christ holds the Scriptures open to "I am the vine, and you are the branches" (John 15:5). This icon was created and tested for outdoor use, so we expect it to grace Polk Street for many years. And thank you to Ed Franklin for installing the icon in the shrine.

If anyone is interested in volunteering in the garden this spring and summer, please contact Marina Arvanitis (marvanitis@uwalumni.com). Parishioners of all ages can learn and serve in the garden – it's fun, rewarding, and no experience (or green thumb) is required.



Prison Ministry

By Steve Cole

Prison Ministry Volunteers Visit Inmates by Mail

On March 25, ten volunteers made short work of writing and addressing Easter cards to 36 inmates of Illinois and federal prisons. Sending cards to prisoners who participated in the Angel Tree Christmas program is the cornerstone of the prison ministry's "Visiting Prisoners by Mail" effort. Each time we send out cards a few prisoners respond, and that begins an ongoing correspondence. As our list of correspondents grows, so does our need for additional writers from within our parish.

Next up for the prison ministry: May 6, Mother's Day cards for the caretakers of Angel Tree, children and June 10, Father's Day cards for the inmates.

We are also starting to plan our October prison ministry Pancake Breakfast to make it a huge success. Volunteers and donations will be urgently needed.

Please contact Pat Cole (patriciaastahl@comcast.net, 773-252-8254) to get involved with the St. Basil Prison Ministry.



Yiayia's Kouzina

By Cindy Schroeder & Dorothy Bezemes

Christos Anesti!!!

Yiayia's Kouzina, a ministry of our St. Basil Philoptochos, is excited to report on the success of our Easter "Koulourakia Run". This is the first year that we offered only koulourakia, but it is also the first year that we offered three different kinds of koulourakia, plus a variety package containing all three. We thank you for your support, not only for this past season, but for the many, many years that Yiayia's Kouzina has been selling these special treats at Easter and Christmas. We also welcome your feedback, and invite you to join us this fall when we start baking again. Until then, enjoy the rest of the spring and the upcoming summer months.

Yiayia's Kouzina's Committee

Saint John the Almsgiver Ministry

By Marina Arvanitis

St. John the Almsgiver Ministry Volunteers Prepare Survival Packs

On Lazarus Saturday, the new St. John the Almsgiver Ministry packed over 30 "survival packs," which our parish will provide to our neighbors who come to our doors for help. Each pack includes a Jewel gift card, CTA single-transit ticket, white t-shirt, a pair of tube socks, toothbrush and travel-sized toothpaste, comb, six Band-Aids, three hand wipes, one granola bar, and one bottle of water. Thank you to all who donated these supplies and helped with the packing, including Stella Antonoglu, Pat and Steve Cole, Ed Franklin, Maria-Kanella Koper.

If you are interested in contributing to future packs, please bring your monetary donations to Vicky Crosby in the church office, or talk to Marina Arvanitis (marvanitis@uwalumni.com) about how to provide supplies. The ministry is also brainstorming ways in which we can live up to the name of our patron saint, St. John the Almsgiver, by serving the most vulnerable in our community. If you have ideas or would like to join these efforts, please speak to Father Dimitri or Marina.

St. John the Almsgiver, celebrated on November 12, was born in the sixth century to a dignitary family in Cyprus. After the death of his wife and children, he became a monk. He was zealous for the dogmas of the Church and fought many heresies, but he considered charity to be his chief task. As Patriarch of Alexandria, he ensured that all 7,000 needy people in the city received provisions each day from the church's treasury. Twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, he sat on the cathedral portico to receive those in need, provide guidance, settle quarrels, and distribute alms. He never refused supplicants. As one story of his life states: "One day, when the saint was visiting the sick, he met a beggar and commanded that he be given six silver coins. The beggar changed his clothes, ran on ahead of the Patriarch, and again asked for alms. Saint John gave him six more silver coins. When the beggar sought charity a third time, and the servants began to chase the fellow away, the Patriarch ordered that he be given twelve pieces of silver, saying, 'Perhaps he is Christ putting me to the test.'" May St. John the Almsgiver pray for and guide our ministry and our parish of St. Basil.



Sunday School

By Jennifer Georgopoulos

Thanks to the Sunday School students and parents for their participation during Holy Week and Holy Pascha. Our myrrh bearers and altar boys did an exceptional job.

Father Dimitri will be discussing with the students how the five senses are personified in The Divine Liturgy. The discussion will be taking place after liturgy on May 6 in the nave. This is a great opportunity for our students to ask questions and learn about how much symbolism is represented throughout liturgy.

The students also learned about His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago. The students created name day and welcoming cards for His Grace Nathanael.

We will have the Sunday School gradation on June 3, 2018. It's hard to believe the school year is almost at an end. We hope everyone will be able to attend.

A special thanks to our Sunday School teachers for their continued hard work and dedication to our students.



Coffee Hour Ministry

The Coffee Hour Ministry at St. Basil allows parishioners the opportunity to host coffee hour twice a month. It's a great way to get involved and promote fellowship at St. Basil while getting to know one another better.

We are looking for volunteers to either host a Coffee Hour or participate in hosting one of our Quarterly Pot Luck Luncheons with a team of other parishioners. We still have a few open dates available for 2018.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the church office at 312-243-3738.



Sunday, May 6	Quarterly Potluck: Christine Rousakis, Vana Kikos, Maren Karras & Kat Lekkas
Sunday, May 13	Coffee Hour: Philoptochos
Sunday, May 20	Coffee Hour: AHEPPA (Themis Frangos)
Sunday, May 27	Coffee Hour: Philoptochos

ST. BASIL CHURCH HOSTS 3rd ANNUAL



DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 31

LOCATION: BILLY GOAT INN, 1535 W. MADISON ST., CHICAGO, IL

TIME: 7PM – 9PM (DOORS OPEN AT 6:30PM)

TRIVIA STARTS PROMPTLY AT 7PM

TEAMS OF 4 TO 6 - \$40/PERSON

**PRICE INCLUDES OPEN BAR (WELL DRINKS AND BEER), ENTIRE FOOD
MENU, AND DESSERT (OPEN BAR FROM 6:45PM TO 8:45PM)**

PRIZES FOR TOP 3 TEAMS

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.STBASILCHICAGO.ORG/TRIVIA

**(TEAM CAPTAINS CAN REGISTER THEIR TEAMS ONLINE WITH TEAM MEMBER
NAMES; EACH INDIVIDUAL CAN PAY SEPARATELY WITH TEAM NAME)**

QUESTIONS? CONTACT ST. BASIL AT (312) 243-3738 OR STBASILCHICAGO@COMCAST.NET

St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church is looking for individuals with marketing expertise/background!

Help our church expand and grow! We are looking for an individual who can help us market our church in the 21st century and help us advertise our events and ministries more effectively. Please see Fr. Dimitri or a member of the Parish Council if you are interested.



Holy Week 2018 —St. Basil's



St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church May 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 Cinco de Mayo
6 Quarterly Potluck Church of the five senses 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy 10:30 am "Sunday School meets" 11:30 am Prison Ministry Mother's Day card writing to caregivers	7 7:00 pm Parish Council Meeting	8 6:30 pm Teacher meeting final	9 6:00 pm Paraklesis (Supplication Service) to the Virgin Mary	10	11	12
13 8:15 am Mother's Day Orthros and Divine Liturgy 10:30 am "Sunday School meets" 11:45 am Philoptochos Meeting	14	15	16 7:00 pm "Great Vespers for Ascension of our Lord (at Lincolnshire IL)" 8:00 pm Leave - Taking of Pascha Vigil at St. Demetrios in Elmhurst	17 8:30 am "Orthros and Divine Liturgy for Ascension of our Lord"	18	19
20 8:15 am Spring General Assembly Orthros and Divine Liturgy 10:30 am "Sunday School meets" 12:00 pm General Assembly 7:00 pm "Great Vespers for Ss. Constantine & Helen (at Palos Hills parish)"	21 8:30 am "Orthros and Divine Liturgy for Ss. Constantine & Helen	22	23 6:00 pm Paraklesis (Supplication Service) to the Virgin Mary	24	25 8:30 am "Orthros and Divine Liturgy for 3rd finding of the head of St. John the Baptist" 12:00 pm Memorials at Elmwood Cemetery	26 8:30 am "Orthros and Divine Liturgy for Saturday of the Souls" 12:00 pm Junior Olympics
27 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy 10:30 am "No Sunday School Class Today" 12:00 pm Junior Olympics 7:00 pm "Great Vespers for Monday of the Holy Spirit (at Holy Trinity Church, Chicago, IL)"	28 8:30 am Memorial Day "Orthros and Divine Liturgy for Monday of the Holy Spirit (at Holy Trinity Church, Chicago)"	29	30 6:00 pm Paraklesis (Supplication Service) to the Virgin Mary	31 6:30 pm 3rd Annual Trivia Night at Billy Goat Inn		

SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 11, 2018

**St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church
Golf Outing**



Odyssey Country Club
19110 S Ridgeland Ave.
Tinley Park, IL

\$135 Includes:

18 Holes of Golf
Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner
Open Bar

\$60 Includes:

Dinner
Open Bar



St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church
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